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PP RUEHBZ RUEHDU RUEHGI RUEHJO RUEHMR RUEHRN
DE RUEHKI #0311 0741504
ZNR UUUUU ZZH
P 151504Z MAR 07
FM AMEMBASSY KINSHASA
TO RUEHC/SECSTATE WASHDC PRIORITY 5779
INFO RUEHXR/RWANDA COLLECTIVE
RUCNSAD/SOUTHERN AFRICAN DEVELOPMENT COMMUNITY
RUEAIIA/CIA WASHDC
RHEFDIA/DIA WASHDC
RHMFISI HQ USEUCOM VAIHINGEN GE
RUFOADA/JAC MOLESWORTH RAF MOLESWORTH UK

UNCLAS KINSHASA 000311

SIPDIS

SENSITIVE
SIPDIS

E.O. 12958: N/A

TAGS: PGOV KPKO CG

SUBJECT: FIRE DESTROYS PART OF DRC NATIONAL DISARMAMENT
AGENCY'S HEADQUARTERS

¶1. (U) A March 9 fire destroyed several offices located at the DRC's national disarmament agency CONADER in downtown Kinshasa. Firemen from the nearby oil company SEP-Congo and the city quickly responded to the blaze which did not spread to adjoining buildings. A visual inspection revealed extensive smoke damage and broken windows on the top three floors of the six-story building, which is shared with several other tenants.

¶2. (U) CONADER coordinator Daniel Kawata, who was in Kisangani the day of the fire with visiting World Bank President Paul Wolfowitz, told us March 13 no important material was destroyed in the fire. He said all billing paperwork, contracts and payment records had been stored in his office and subsequently moved to a safe location. Kawata said most of the material destroyed was correspondence, desks, computers and other office equipment. CONADER deputy coordinator Innocente Bakanseka, who was in the building at the time of the incident, was quoted in press reports as saying copies existed of all the lost documents.

¶3. (SBU) Kawata said an official inquiry is underway to determine the cause of the fire, but he suspected the blaze was deliberately set. Press reports indicated an electrical short may have caused the incident. Kawata said the fire started in Bakanseka's office and quickly spread to two adjoining offices. His own office suffered smoke and water damage, requiring him to temporarily relocate to another part of the building. Kawata would not speculate as to who might be responsible.

¶4. (SBU) Comment: Though the always hyperactive Kinshasa rumor mill is churning out predictably sensationalistic versions how the fire started, there is no evidence of arson. Electrical fires are very common in Kinshasa, particularly during the current rainy seasons with frequent electrical storms. In any case, the incident will not in any case hamper the work of CONADER, whose staff has been reduced to less than 100 and whose activities have been temporarily suspended since December pending further funding from the World Bank and other donors. End comment.

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